

CLEBURNE COUNTY

Honorable W.G. Sarrell, Jr.

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Vista Volunteer: Bernice McGee

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Initiate the JumpStart Program (birth to 5 year old Kindergarten readiness program).
2. To implement an educational awareness campaign
3. Continue capacity building so that effective drug and violence prevention programs can be implemented.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19)

physical and mental well-being in the county.

Reduce Teen Pregnancy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Educate the school system at large about the availability of Patient First Case Management through the Alabama Department of Health.
- Continue to provide support for school social workers including financial resources, materials and medical resources.
- Identify already pregnant teens to refer them to insurance and medical resources
- Support prevention programs in the schools

Locate and educate parents of birth to age five population on the availability of healthcare coverage and how to utilize these services.

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Apply for one or more grants from "Covering Alabama Kids and Families" to sponsor events focusing on the birth to age five population in Cleburne County.
- To sponsor one or more events to screen for health care coverage or educate on preventive care.
- Provide materials to this population regarding active immunizations, physical examinations and testing.
- Provide resources and information on treatment and prevention of head lice

Youth Obesity

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Support grant funding for Physical Education in the schools.
- Support the Health and Nutrition Council activities in schools, specifically the healthy snacks in vending machines pilot program currently underway in Pleasant Grove Elementary School.

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Reduce the impact of Methamphetamine Culture

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Educate and support community awareness efforts by:
 - (a) Supporting Alabama Cooperative Extension System's "Walk Your Land" Program.
 - (b) Encouraging a public awareness article in the local newspaper.
 - (c) Providing educational material by setting up booths at community events, such as the July 4th Celebration, Cleburne Day and Health Fairs.
 - (d) Support prevention programs in the schools
 - Educate the Policy Council on the development of national and state protocols for handling methamphetamine labs where children are involved.
 - Follow and update the Policy Council of new developments concerning the Attorney General's Task Force on Methamphetamines providing feed back to the task force as needed

Substance Abuse Prevention (Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco)

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Develop and promote an annual alcohol/drug prevention program for the schools, specifically targets sixth, Seventh, and Eighth graders, which will include Operation Save Teens, a panel of locally incarcerated individuals with drug/alcohol stories and LINC ID. It will encourage the use of the "Play by The Rules" material by social studies teachers and support Heflin's No Smoking Ordinance
- Procure educational materials from Agency on Substance Abuse Prevention SAMSHA and other clearinghouse sites offering information/materials at no cost (emphasis on Tobacco)
- Apply to ADECA for Governor's Safe and Drug-Free Communities Grant and other corporate/foundation grants to cover expenses of implementation of these programs (speaker fees, coordination cost, LINC ID presentation etc.)
- Provide Drug education to parents of children in the after school program and to the PTO's
- Promoter Parent Project as preventative measure to drug/alcohol use.

Abuse and/or Neglect

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Gather information about model programs that deal with victims of abuse/neglect related to drug use
- Survey other counties regarding Methamphetamine support groups for adults and children
- Educate front line workers concerning signs and symptoms of methamphetamine abuse
- Support the Cleburne County Family Violence Coalition

Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Create Higher Expectations

Policy Council Action Steps:

- The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council should promote a publicity campaign raising awareness to the many issues facing education in Cleburne County. The campaign will use statistical data as its basis
- The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council should act as an advocacy group on issues related to children, local funding for education and regulations regarding substandard housing
- Encourage implementation and enforcement of state truancy policies

Adequate Funding

Policy Council Action Steps:

- The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council will support funding reform at the local and state level
- The Cleburne County Children's Policy Council will continue to support and assist with the acquisition of grants and resources that are coordinated with the Cleburne County Board of Education

Quality Education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work collaboratively and support the Cleburne County Board of Education in the development of a strategic plan during 2005-2006
- (A) Work with the Superintendent of Education to adjust the 1995 Foundation Program and adequately fund the 4x4 curriculum, 2005 SACS standards, career technical education and NCLB federal legislation
- (B) Assist the Superintendent of Education in obtaining adequate funding for social services and health services and reach his goal of a social worker for every 1,000 students and a nurse for every 500 students

Early Care and

Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Have all children healthy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Continue to distribute material for ALL Kids, Medicaid, and Alabama Child Caring insurance programs at community activities
- Seek a pediatric dentist and work to improve the dental health of Cleburne County's children
- Promote the availability of mental health counseling

School readiness

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Encourage efforts to obtain and sustain funding to continue Pleasant Grove's school based pre-Kindergarten program and expand Pre-K to all Cleburne County Elementary Schools. The Council will support legislation for increased funding and changes in the law that would ensure pre-K in every school
- Develop and distribute brochures, flyers, pamphlets and news articles to raise community awareness in the need for early education
- Encourage and assist in early reading initiatives such as JumpStart (program for birth to 5 year olds)
- Encourage pre-K, day care providers, day care centers, parents and others caring for children to improve the quality of their service

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Build (basic) infrastructure

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Actively support the Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) process in Heflin as one of six communities chosen for the 2005-2006 year. The Children's Policy Council will seek representation on appropriate ACE committees to assure that children will be in financially stable homes where basic needs are being met.
- Support efforts to establish an America Save chapter in Cleburne County to encourage banks, HEARTS, employers and families to work together to get people to establish saving money as a habit
- Encourage the use of Reality Check and other financial programs offered by the Alabama Cooperative Extension Systems and other non-profit/educational institutions to increase financial literacy among school-age children and young adults

GED and Job training

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Promote the GED by creating awareness of the availability of courses, times, dates, locations, and qualifications.
- Promote the use of the Cheaha Career Center and other job training programs

Transportation

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Search for opportunities to coordinate public transportation with Calhoun County to serve families in need of transportation
- Explore possibilities of locating "stations" where vans or busses could pick up riders.
- Continue to encourage the donation of vehicles to HEARTS or other organizations for use by families with transportation needs.

Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and

guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Reduce educational barriers to academic success

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Investigate grant funding to initiate or extend tutoring programs to each school.
- Encourage the involvement of businesses and organizations to support a partnership with the Cleburne County Schools
- Provide a resource person and funding to duplicate a proven reliable mentoring program in the schools
- Explore avenues for sustained funding for education, tutoring and mentoring programs

Motivating parents to become involved in educational goals

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Seek grant opportunities to continue the Social Worker in the Schools Program
- Work to increase GED enrollment for parents
- Work to establish a Parenting Resource Center
- Promote Parent classes to teach discipline

Policy Recommendation

1. Concentrate resources on the youngest
2. Eliminate unfunded mandates
3. Keep it simple (see recommendation under number 7 and 8 of Needs Assessment Evaluation)
4. Pre-K for all four year olds adequately funded by the state

Accomplishments

1. The Sarrell Medical Clinic of Cleburne County has been established to provide full dental services for children covered by Medicaid, ALL-Kids, Alabama Child Caring insurance, and all children that can not afford dental care. The Target date to open for business is currently September 1, 2005. This date is contingent upon completion of the building and delivery of necessary Equipment and supplies.
2. Another accomplishment from the 2004 Needs Assessment is that the Cleburne County school system now has funded a fulltime Social Worker who can provide counseling for risk children and reducing truancy.